Uniting Against a Common Enemy, by Dr. Huey Newton-See Page 7

COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

Volume 7, Number 1 | Suggested Donation $1.50 | February 1997

Jury Grants MOVE Bombing Survivor $1.5 Million in Compromise Verdict

Federal Court Acts to Protect Guilty Officials

By *Commemorator* Staff

After an 11-year cover-up of local and federal *culpa* for the May 13, 1985 bombing of the "City of Brotherly Love's" populous Cobbs Creek neighborhood, a federal civil petit jury in Philadelphia awarded $1.5 million in damages for "pain and suffering" to MOVE survivor Ramona Africa and the families of John and James Africa, who were killed in the resulting fire. The jury held former Police Commissioner Gregor Sambor and former Fire Commissioner William Richmond responsible and directed each to pay $1 a week punitive damages for 11 years, a clear attempt to address the 11-year suppression of redress by the government itself, but federal judge Louis Pollock overturned that portion of the jury's decision.

The outrage and fear which have afflicted the burned-out community for over a decade continued to punctuate all attempts by the judge to "jury-rig" a "balanced" settlement of the federal court case. *No one* has yet been held responsible for the civilian bombing of an entire West Philadelphia row-house neighborhood for political reasons thinly veiled behind a merely ticketable violation of "creating a public nuisance."

Courtesy of MOVE

MOVE members helped homeless people find places to live, assisted the elderly with home repairs, and looked after neighbors' pets.

Residents Offered No Compensation

The subsequent holocaust killed 11 children, women and men of MOVE, and left an additional 1,206 victims homeless, with nothing but the clothes they wore. It took years for the city to rebuild the firestormed rubble, during which time the families or residents received *no* compensation. The victims were offered nothing; Ramona Africa was forced to serve seven years in prison for the crime of being the sole adult survivor of the blaze. No official has been held legally responsible for the death and destruction. The legal situation is still that "a crime was committed, but there were no criminals," the line the state has pursued for over a decade. The federal judge at first refused to shelter Messrs. Sambor and Richmond behind a claim of "good faith" immunity, but later overruled the jury's finding of malice on their part against MOVE and its members. They did the act, he found, but did not hate MOVE enough to justify punitive damages. Commentators questioned why the judge felt killing in cold blood less culpable than error derived from hatred and hostility.

Divided opinion among survivors

Continued on page 14

Managed Health Care Called Genocide

Official Policy by Commission and Omission to Blame

By *Commemorator* Staff

While the number of people living below the federal poverty line has increased, communities of color and poor working families across the country face a decreasing availability of medical care. It is no surprise we now suffer corresponding increases, at epidemic levels, of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, meningitis, hepatitis, typhoid, polio and whooping cough. Institutions of managed care and health care rationing programs aggressively vie for and get billions of tax dollars previously used to fund public health care, while both doctors and patients have no voice and no power in the financially managed health care industry.

Managed care is a capitated payment system where hospitals, physicians and other providers negotiate set payment rates for services they provide based on the number of patients for whom they are responsible. Unlike traditional indemnity plans, in which the insurance company bears the financial risk and burden of patients requiring health care, capitation places the risk and burden on the health care provider — hospitals, clinics and physicians. To maximize windfall profits, the insurer and the HMO determine what services they will and will not provide.

Photo by Raymond Joe

Participant in recent health care conference in Berkeley, CA, raises questions to Dr. Tolbert B. Small about the increased cost of HMO health care services community people are forced to use.

Increased deaths from preventable and treatable diseases

Reports from employees and patients of health care facilities from

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Editorial

Frightened out of our Rights

There's More to Fear Than Fear Itself

Courtesy of Partisan Defense Committee

Freedoms previously guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution have been legislated away in favor of a police state in America.

Election years have recently brought us ever-escalating politician-promoted hue and cry campaigns which spread fear of "terrorism" to solicit support of new "anti-crime" and "anti-terrorist" legislation, to increase funding for law enforcement and military apparatus, both nationally and internationally. It is through this same fear of personal harm that many of the greatest civil, human and other freedoms previously guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution have been legislated away in favor of a police state in America. Alleged, impending civic danger and the need for increased "national security" or "public protection" have been cited as the reasons for illegal police and paramilitary attacks on the population hundreds of times in U.S. history, where politicians refuse to address urgent domestic economic issues. To stampede workers, politicians point to the wrong sources of the terror. They go so far as to make up dangers, to lie and commit perjury, to break down doors and to murder leaders of working people. It *did not* end with Fred Hampton. These terror tactics have imprisoned hundreds of thousands and deprived them of civil rights, scaring virtually the entire black community into a new form of slavery, using racialism to divide working class leadership by color and national origin.

Blatant, state-sponsored terror levied on our civilian population in oppressed communities seized the front pages in 1985 with the bombing of the MOVE organization on Osage Avenue in Philadelphia, and concomitant razing of an entire six block working class community by government officials using military weaponry and arsenal. Eight years later, in another part of the country, the entire country watched as 50 white men, women and children were burned to death in Waco, Texas. In each instance, the government lied and claimed these groups represented a threat to the community, but the government itself was the source of the terrorism. It committed multiple murders, and its agents stood above the law. First Amendment rights of expression and association, rights to property, rights to due process, rights to an impartial hearing, rights to be confronted with accusations by confidential informants and government agents, rights to be secure in houses, persons, papers and effects, rights to freedom of worship and rights to bear arms for protection of the people against a tyrannical government were sacrificed in the process.

Terror of Starvation

At the same time, the terror of starvation, disease, unemployment and homelessness that poor families suffer is increasingly horrible, as federal assistance programs continue to be slashed and burned. This year, President Clinton completed former President Reagan's dismantling of the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal, leaving tens of thousands of families on the streets, while implementation of the "one-strike" laws allow entire families to be summarily evicted if there is a *suspected* drug dealer or drug user in the family. "Deadbeat" dads are targeted for imprisonment, too, yet few jobs pay sufficient wages to allow for both child support and survival.

Working people know the innate terror that reigns when our loved ones are endangered and vital resources are withheld. Preventable diseases continue to rage in poor communities throughout the country. Starting with California: in Sacramento, tuberculosis has increased by 50%. Whooping cough continues to spread in San Diego, and meningitis is reaching epidemic proportions in Redding, where over 500 cases of Hepatitis A have been reported. Public health services have been eradicated as medical rationing and managed care programs and policies go into full effect. The recently legislated federal welfare reform bill will discontinue welfare benefits, food stamps, Medicaid and SSI for thousands. No aid will be available for undocumented and documented workers, the disabled and elderly and other low-income workers. No adult will receive assistance for more than five years, even to ensure the basics needed for survival. Meanwhile, the Anti-Terrorism Act was passed, increasing authority and funding for law-enforcement to monitor "suspected" groups and individuals. It puts progressive organizations in danger of being subject to harassment as potentially "dangerous," if they demonstrate militant dedication to a program of meeting needs of minority and oppressed people. But as the history of the Black Panther Party shows, anyone the government considers a threat will be branded as criminal and denied all basic civil rights.

Prison Slavery

The United States tops all industrialized countries in numbers of incarcerated persons. As of 1992, the United States had an incarceration rate of 455 per 100,000, the highest in the world (according to the New York Times, February 11, 1992). By the end of 1994, the total prison population exceeded 1.5 million, with another 3.5 million on parole or probation. According to at least one prediction, cited by Congressman John Conyers in Congressional hearings on the National Drug Strategy on June 5, 1991, 47% of all African-American and Hispanic males between 18 and 25 would be in prison by this year, at the current rate of incarceration.

According to Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, as of 1988, some 92% of all criminal cases were resolved by guilty pleas without trial, while in some states, such as New York, the percentage, as recently quoted by its Chief Justice, is over 99% of all criminal cases.

In 1990, according to Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, there were 800,459 police officers in the United States, accounting for 46.5% of all law enforcement officers, and they accounted for 48% of the law enforcement payroll, amounting to $21 billion. There were 555,813 correctional officers, accounting for 32.3% of law enforcement officials, 30% of the payroll and costing $1.3 billion. Combined, police officers and correction officers accounted for 1,356,782 officials, 78.8% of all law enforcement officials, earning 78% of the law enforcement budget, at a cost of some $3.6 billion.

This year, political candidates have unilaterally proposed all federal prison inmates be forced to work forty hours a week, for the profit of the corporations or government agencies who get the contract, adding to the enslaved, cheap, imprisoned labor force, already an $8 billion industry. This type of policy gives the states, counties and cities economic and political incentive to increase arrests.

Police cars park on corners of streets of neighborhoods where the poor and minorities live; they lie in

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Opinions and positions taken in articles with bylines are those of their writers. The views expressed in the bylined editorial and opinion pieces published by The Commemorator *do not* necessarily *indicate its endorsement or support. — The Editor*

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COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

"SERVING ALL OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES"

Volume 7, Number 1, February, 1997 Oakland, California

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The Truth and Nothing But the Truth

On October 1, 1996, in retaliation for testimony pointing to the innocence of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, Veronica Jones was placed under arrest for an outstanding, two-year old, out-of-state bench warrant, dragged from the witness stand in Judge Albert Sabo's court and taken to jail by two New Jersey police officers. She was released the morning of October 2, 1996, on $10,000 bail.

As a critical eyewitness to the events surrounding the 1981 shooting of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner, for which Mumia Abu-Jamal was convicted and sentenced to death, Jones took the stand October 1, 1996, to testify to police coercion before the 1982 trial which, she says, forced her to retract her initial account of having seen two men run from the scene of the crime.

Jones said she was completely unaware of the 1994 New Jersey warrant, which is for alleged bad check charges, until the District Attorney arose in the Sabo courtroom to ask she be taken immediately "into custody... as a fugitive from justice." Judge Sabo claimed no jurisdiction, overruling defense attorneys' pleas and objections that Jones at least be permitted to complete her testimony in the Abu-Jamal matter, and Jones was escorted out by the new Jersey police officers waiting outside.

The New Jersey police officers said they had known Jones' Camden, New Jersey address since the time the bench warrant was issued two years ago, but no action had been taken to serve the warrant until Philadelphia Assistant District Attorney Fisk phoned them the week before.

Jones, a black mother of three, agreed to appear at the October supplemental evidentiary hearing for Abu-Jamal ordered by Pennsylvania Supreme Court in response to a defense petition. Asked why she had come forward now, Jones said that she did not want her grandchildren to "think their grandmom was living a lie."

Jones was determined not to be intimidated by the Assistant District Attorney's declaration, "I'm promising to lock you up." She had barely begun testifying in Abu-Jamal's defense to help corroborate four other witnesses' statements regarding prosecutorial misconduct before, during and after his arrest and trial and illuminate the facts. Jones told the court that after Abu-Jamal's arrest, while she was jailed on outstanding felony charges, Philadelphia policemen visited her jail cell and threatened that she would face a long prison sentence on gun possession charges if she did not change her previous public statements about the deadly incident.

"Those policemen told me I was to name Mr. Jamal as the shooter," Jones testified, adding she didn't do that, but did alter her statements about seeing the two fleeing men, to avoid the threatened extended imprisonment on her pending charges.

Abu-Jamal's attorneys argue, "The prosecution's blatant effort to coerce Veronica Jones on the witness stand in 1996 spoke volumes about the prosecutorial misconduct used to intimidate her in 1982, and which has tainted every piece of evidence in this case since its inception. If the prosecution can resort to such open misconduct before the public, one can only imagine what the prosecution and police do to coax and coerce witnesses behind closed doors."

On November 1, 1996, Judge Sabo ruled against the new evidence proffered by Jones, dismissing her testimony as "incredible and worthy of little or no belief," adding that "her claim that the men were actually running away from the scene is of no moment," ignoring the related fact that Abu-Jamal was sitting on the ground, unconscious, bleeding severely from a near-fatal gunshot wound inflicted by Officer Faulkner. Abu-Jamal's Defense Committee says Sabo's deci-

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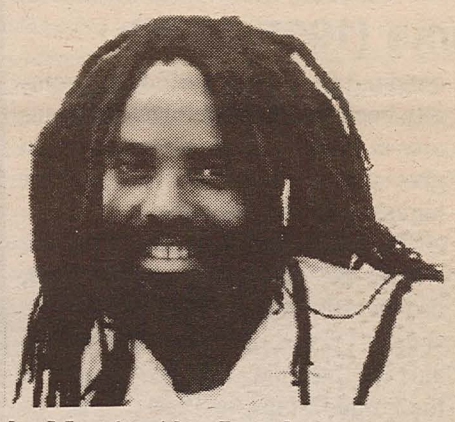
More War for the Poor



by Mumia Abu-Jamal

"The very development of American society is creating a new kind of blindness about poverty. The poor are increasingly slipping out of the very experience and consciousness of the nation."

— Michael Harrington,
The Other America: Poverty in the U.S. (1962)

In a move that was as chilling as it was Malthusian, U.S. Democratic President Bill "Bubba" Clinton signed a so-called Welfare "Reform" (read: *Destruction*) Bill that neither Reagan nor Bush, in their finest hour, could have succeeded in passing.

By affixing his name to this legislative obscenity, "the man from Hope," to protect his political ass, dashed the hopes of millions of the poor.

In this age of triumphant capitalism, to be "poor" is a synonym for being "bad," quite ironic for a president who trumpeted his own poor Arkansan origins as a kind of New Age Lincolnesque.

Masked in the words of "helping the poor," the Democrats, in league with their bruderbund in the Republican Party, have sacrificed poor men, women and children upon the fiery brazier of political ambition. The Scottish anthropologist and religious scholar, Sir James G. Frazer, in his classic *The Golden Bough* (originally published 1890) wrote, of ancient sacrifices:

"When the Carthaginians were defeated and besieged by Agathocles, they ascribed their disasters to the wrath of Baal; for whereas in former times they had been wont to sacrifice to him their own children, they had latterly fallen into the habit of buying children and rearing them to be victims. So, to appease the angry god, two hundred children of the noblest families were picked out for sacrifice.... [T]hey were sacrificed by being placed, one by one, on the sloping hands of the brazen image, from which they rolled into a pit of fire."

I say to you, that was a nobler sacrifice than is this! For the sacrifice of those in antiquity occurred under the misapprehension and belief that such an act would allay worse chaos from a vengeful God.

Why are the poor among us today to be sacrificed?

To balance a national budget?

Hardly.

Less than two percent of the nation's budget pays for welfare, so it won't bust under its weight. Why?

Think back to when reports surfaced of higher employment levels, and the news sent Wall Street into a panicked fall?

Good news to most of us, it caused a sea of frowns on financial markets, and it is these very markets, the power center of capital, that dictate the actions of politicians, including the abolition of social safety nets, like welfare.

When millions starve, workers are duly disciplined to silent acquiescence, for fear of losing what little they have.

Fear creates a quiescent labor force, who, when faced with givebacks, won't even whimper.

High poverty = capitalism triumphant.

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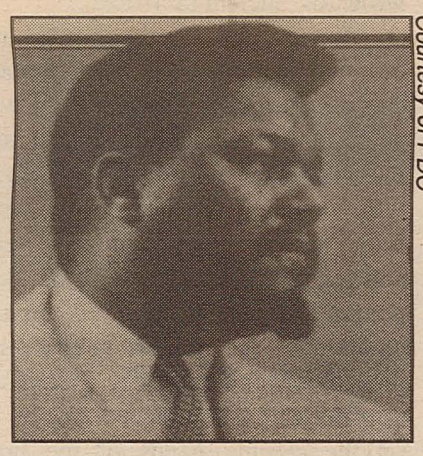
OBITUARIES

In Memory of

Robert F. Williams (1925-1996)


Courtesy of PDC

Robert F. Williams died Tuesday, October 15, 1996, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was 71 years old. Williams, who had been ill and suffering from Hodgkin's disease, was part of a generation of black folk who, through their struggle for dignity and decency, learned at first hand the obstacles facing the goal of black liberation. He started the Deacons for Defense of Monroe County, North Carolina, which served as inspiration for the Black Panther Party.

An ex-Marine, Williams had organized, drilled and armed members of the Monroe County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for self-defense. After James Meredith was shot during his march of protest against not being allowed to enroll in the University of Mississippi, Williams organized the Deacons for Defense who carried their shotguns in the open.

When he learned that several of the Deacons were on the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) payroll, and began investigating this, the FBI began a series of harassment tactics.

This led to a federal warrant being issued for Williams' arrest for kidnapping. Members of Williams' organization said that a white couple from the area, whom they had detained for a short period, had actually been sent into the black community at night -- as provocateurs -- to give police an official excuse for harassment and violence.

In 1961, Williams fled to Cuba where he continued his struggle, broadcasting on a 50,000 watt radio station. Later, he moved to China, and to Tanzania, until his return to the United States in 1969.

"Robert Williams had a great influence on the kind of party we developed," Huey P. Newton wrote of that time period in *Revolutionary Suicide*. "Williams had been active in Monroe, North Carolina, with a program of armed self-defense that had enlisted many in the community."

A civil rights leader turned militant revolutionary, Williams was the founder and president of the Monroe NAACP and founded the Deacons for Defense and Justice, after being rejected by the NAACP for his armed self-defense stance. Williams called for armed self-defense at a time when southern black communities were under attack by such groups as the White Citizen Council and the Ku Klux Klan. He became isolated from the mainstream non-violence movement led by such people as Dr. Martin Luther King.

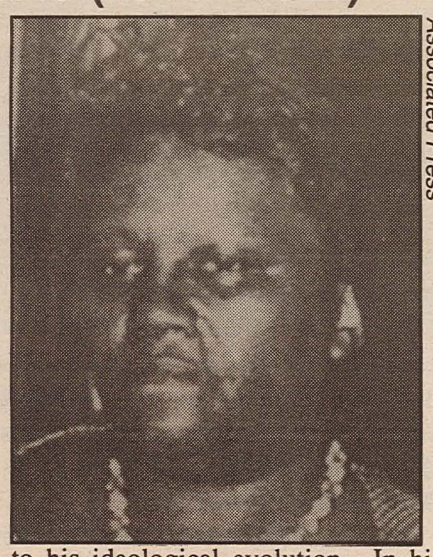
In his later years, he was active in the Peoples Association for Human Rights. He lectured and worked on his autobiography. According to his son, John, his father was pessimistic about American society to the end of his days and felt that the gains of the civil rights movement were being destroyed and he did not see how this was going to be changed.

He is survived by his wife, Mabel, two sons, John and Franklin, two brothers, Edward and John, both of Detroit, and two grandsons. Another son, Robert Jr, died of leukemia in 1991.

In Memory of

Ella Lee Little-Collins (1914 - 1996)

Ella Lee Little-Collins, civil rights activist, educator, sister of Malcolm X, and supporter of black liberation movements across the world, died on August 3, 1996, in Boston at the age of 84. She will be remembered as one who carried on the long tradition of true black women warriors.


Associated Press

The eleven half brothers and sisters of the Little family, including Ella and Malcolm, were raised on their grandfather's Butler, Georgia farm. Like so many southern black workers at the time, Ella Lee moved northward to New York City, and then Boston, to seek a better life, operating several rooming houses for income and scrimping and saving to achieve some measure of economic independence.

When their father, Reverend Earl Little, organizer for the Universal Negro Improvement Association and Baptist minister, was killed by the Ku Klux Klan in Lansing, Michigan, and Malcolm's mother, Louise, was institutionalized from a nervous breakdown shortly after, Ella Lee took sixteen year-old Malcolm to her home in Roxbury, Massachusetts, raising him single-handedly, remaining a significant influence on Malcolm's life as close advisor and supporter.

Malcolm recruited her into the Nation of Islam in the 1950's, and Ella Lee was active in creating the group's first Boston mosque and setting up its first day-care center. In 1959, five years before Malcolm, she broke with the Nation, and became an orthodox Sunni Muslim, continuing her commitment to the education of her people by founding the Sarah A. Little School of Preparatory Arts in Boston, which taught Arabic, Swahili, French and Spanish.

Ella Lee continued to play a central role in Malcolm's life. It was Ella Lee who provided the funds to enable Malcolm to make the pilgrimage to Mecca which would be critical to his ideological evolution. In his autobiography, Malcolm said, "She was the first really proud Black woman I had seen in my life." When Malcolm was murdered, Ella Lee traveled from Boston to identify his body, telling reporters at a news conference she would choose the leaders of the Organization of Afro-American Unity to succeed him.

Ella Lee was active in civil rights causes throughout her life. For example, she worked closely in Harlem, New York, with Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., to create a Black Studies program at the Community College of New York (CCNY), now Medgar Evers College, and supported the first black student demonstration there. For her tireless work in this arena, she has been called the "mother of Black Studies." According to Rodnell Collins, her son, it was Ella Lee who presented the first Malcolm X Achievement Award to Adam Clayton Powell, Sr.

In addition to Rodnell Collins, Ella Lee is survived by three brothers, a sister and two grandchildren, and will be remembered not only for her tremendous impact on the life of Malcolm X, but for her many achievements and contributions to the international struggle for self-determination of black people.

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Letters to the Editor

A Political Prisoner

Dear Editor,

I am writing to request a copy of the recent issue of your paper; the one with the article in it about the jury member in Ruchell Magee's case now coming forward to try and get him a new trial. I saw the article in a copy of your paper that Ruchell showed me. He is a friend of mine. I've known him for years. And I have always supported any effort to get him a new trial and to gain his release.

I, myself, am a political prisoner and felt a close comradeship with the effort to free Ruchell and political prisoners of his sort. And anything I can do to contribute toward the cause and his release I would do gladly. The guy got a bum rap and doesn't deserve it. He was left behind by an uncaring system that singled him out as an example of one that wouldn't buckle under to their demands. A true rebel. And a limelight for a cause during an era that radiated change. I for one, still support the cause for that change. But for now, as a prisoner, I realize the effort must be to free those like Ruchell, who fought and fell for the cause. And deserve our complete support to gain his release. That will do more to further the cause than all the rhetoric in the world, and all the midnight oil burnt in coffee houses, or secret meetings to dream up fancy ideas to create "the new revolution."

Please let me know how I can get a copy of that issue with the article. I am willing to pay for it. Just let me know the cost. I would like to know how much a subscription for your paper is also.

Awaiting your reply. And most assuredly—yours in the cause,

Corkey Ogle B-35475
P.B.S.P. "A" Fac. 5 Bld. #101
P.O. Box 7500
Crescent City,
Calif. 95532

Dear Mr. Ogle,

Almost 30 years ago, the Black Panther Party founder Huey P. Newton put forth a concept, while he was imprisoned on a second-degree manslaughter charge, that took me a while to grasp at the time, but still stands now as true and gives framework for what you have written about. He stated in an interview that the oppressed masses' destiny is tied to the political prisoner, just as the destiny of the political prisoner (who embodies the vision, practice and principles of freedom and justice) is tied to the oppressed masses, and that the real freedom of political prisoners is one and the same as the oppressed. The point is that the political prisoner symbolizes an advanced sector of the oppressed, and who dares to struggle for justice, and who is uncompromising in his/her principles and goals in the interest of the oppressed and exploited masses.

Yes, it is true, as you say, that "to gain the release of Ruchell (and people like him) will do more to further the cause than all the rhetoric in the world..." The fact of the matter also is, that a true revolutionary remains *revolutionary, in confinement or not. No prison has ever been successful in extinguishing the revolutionary spirit of the true revolutionary.*

All those who exploit and oppress us have been successful in doing is denying our fighters access to the people we fight for. They seek to break our revolutionary spirit, but they cannot. They seek to deny our comrades and the oppressed community, our leadership, our example, our direction. As long as they own the key to your cell door they can and do deny the people your physical presence, but that is all.

They have already moved the jobs inside, next will follow the non-convict workers themselves! In which case your condition will not be our past, but our future. You may not be our historic fighters, but are part of the vanguard of the fight. The Commemorator *is a way to reach out, a way to develop the kind of communication needed to deliver victory as soon as possible. The paper is available for those who identify with the BPP's goals and principles, whether or not they can afford to pay for it. The goals and principles, the way we see it, are more critical to realize now, today, than in 1966. I have enclosed a copy of the issue you requested. We ask those who can, to donate $12.50 annually for a subscription.*

All Power to the People
Commemorator *editor*
Melvin Dickson

Prisons or Education

Dear Editor,

Recently I had a chance to read *The Commemorator*, and found it very interesting. I was particularly interested in the news about Geronimo Pratt. You see, he and I have been incarcerated since 1972.

I have a board hearing this month, but the Governor-appointed board members are not releasing anyone convicted of murder. I've maintained that I am innocent, but the board sees my refusal as a form of denial. I don't care what they think.

When the public finally realizes that most of the money raised under the pretext of school bonds is actually being spent on prisons, I think the public will be very angry. California politicians have routinely tricked people to vote on bond measures to raise money for education. Once the issue is on the ballot, politicians would amend the education issue with a provision to fund more prisons.

It's sort of odd that all types of social programs are being under-funded, but there's plenty of money to build prisons. If the public understood why this has gone on over the last 10 years, they will begin to see that all this law and order rhetoric has little benefit for the public, in that it is more profitable for the state to incarcerate its citizens than it is to provide them with a quality education, or groom them to be "future leaders."

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Captive Audience

The Rise of Gangs Inside and Outside

By John Donner

There are a lot of things to say from a perspective of what will or won't work. Considering that the necessity for organization is one of the principal lessons of history, gangs are a better form of organization than none at all; that is why people join them, but they certainly aren't any solution to the problem. The economic, social, political and military contradictions that keep the underclass exploited, oppressed, marginalized and repressed are causes which underlie gangs and gang culture.

Gang culture exists as specific reaction to the overall class-based contradiction of economic exploitation, social oppression, political marginalization and military repression that is the material history defining the basic relationship between the ruling overclass and subjugated underclass.

The economic-social aspect of the contradiction underlying the rise of gangs may be seen in the material history of development of the major American gang cultures, whether ethnic-based traditional old-guard gangsters or new-guard triads, posses, *et al.* Each grouping rose as specific reaction to the material conditions imposed by their rank within the social order as an economically exploited, socially oppressed, politically marginalized, militarily repressed grouping. These groupings, in very large part, with the exception of African American-born citizens whose forebearers arrived in chains, were (and the pattern continues) poor immigrant groupings. American immigration policy sought not only to supply ultra-cheap exploitable labor, but also to guarantee a multi-racial or multi-ethnic labor force, within the context of institutional racialism as a counterbalance against the formation of labor solidarity and organization across racial lines as a manifestation of class consciousness.

The political aspect of the contradiction accelerating gang development is partially summed up in the adages "he who owns the gold makes the rules" and "money is the mother's milk of politics." The politically enacted rules which form the legal infrastructure which supports economic exploitation, social oppression, political marginalization and military repression of the underclass by the ruling class are always dictated by the ten percent whose high rank in the social order is based on economically exploiting the underclass. The material contradictions seen in the "hood" (so-called ghetto) and poor communities are not only the direct result of the economic exploita-

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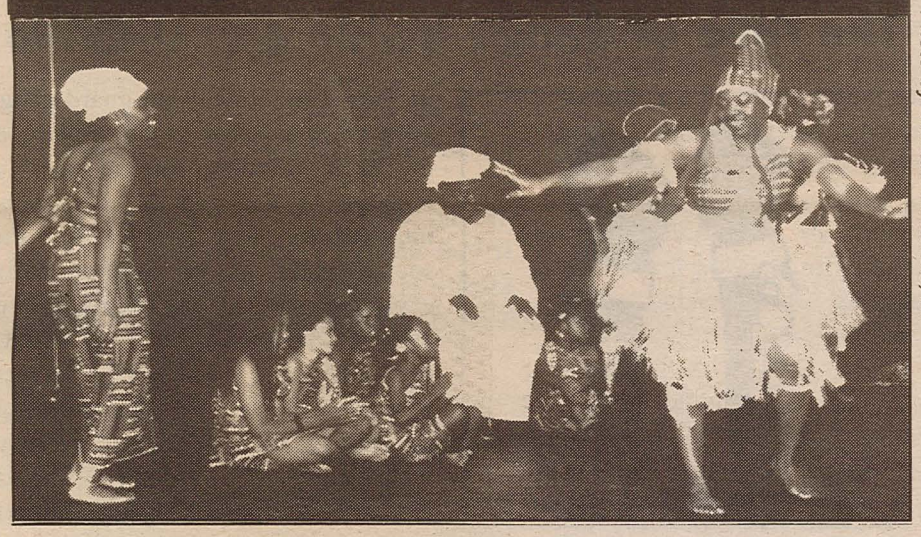

Photo by William H. Jones, Jr.

"Being expatriates, the culture is for the benefit of exposing our children growing up in America. For every dance, there is a story line."
Tawoda Refell, founder of Dehcontee Dance Company.

By William H. Jones Jr.

On the stage of Mosswood Park Hall in Oakland, California, the Dehcontee Liberian Dance Troupe presents a repertoire for national unity among the twenty-six tribal groups currently ravaged by the horrors of civil war in Liberia.

For Tawoda Reffell, troupe founder and choreographer, the performance is a means of preserving the culture of her Liberian homeland and sharing those traditions with others through the form of dance. "Dance is my passion," she said, adding that the troupe helps to educate Americans about the various tribes that inhabit the nation of Liberia.

In 1822, Liberia was used for settlement by African-Americans, mostly members of the African Colonization Society (ACS), who sought to go "back to Africa." The colonization program served both the genuine patriotic aspirations of freed slaves and the imperialist motivations of the United States government. Consequently, Liberia's population consists of both freed slaves from the United States and indigenous continental Africans, contributing to the richness of Liberian culture.

Although Liberia declared independence from the African Colonization Society in 1947, the country has suffered from a high degree of Yankee-inspired economic and political manipulation since. In addition to being a tax haven for the world's shipping and other industries, Liberia is also the largest recipient of U.S.-based, charitable aid to Africa for the last twenty years, 90% of which does not ever get to those that need it. Liberia's ports are known to be overflowing with garbage—filled with floating, decaying, rotten food and supplies never distributed due to official corruption, graft and profiteering.

Reffell says she was "motivated to form the Dehcontee Company to heal the people of her nation who have been torn asunder by civil war," which has devastated an already starving and impoverished population. Many Liberians, including children, have been displaced to refugee camps in neighboring African states and countries.

"We are all Liberians. We decided to form a Liberian group. Being expatriates, the culture is for the benefit of enriching our children growing up in America," Reffell said describing the company's genesis and purpose. "As you know, Liberia is not very well known to most United States citizens, although it should be, because it was a refuge for American ex-slaves returning to Africa. Our goal is to educate more than entertain; that's our purpose. There is a story line for every dance we have. We present folk tales. A lot of people have the misconception that African culture is about witchcraft and blood. We work to dispel these false notions."

"A lot of people have the misconception that African culture is about witchcraft and blood."

The Dehcontee Liberian Dance Company presents an annual autumn festival in Oakland, called "Panafest"; a celebration of Liberian culture, music and dance. The event has taken place since 1992, and includes professional Liberian artists, often from the Liberian National Dance Troupe, as well as local African-American companies. This non-profit organization also performs at special events for supportive groupings or organizations or others interested in restoring life to a condition of well-being and cultural creativity for all the multiple ethnic groups of Liberia.

Frightened

Continued from page 2

wait, as they did when Rodney King came by that night, when they can routinely stop anyone matching a standard description for the particular racial or ethnic group, and, upon investigation, find "suspicious activity" warranting detention, or an alleged crime in progress, or cause a high-speed chase. Then they demonstrate their power over individuals in the form of what the courts later call "denial of civil rights under color of law," which for those on the street means "getting the shit beat out of you by the cops."

Zero Tolerance

In San Diego, California, local officials have installed a "Zero Tolerance" zone in an area that encompasses several blocks of San Diego's lowest-income communities singled out for special law enforcement treatment, where longtime residents report being aggressively trailed by police cars as they drive on their own streets, their kids report being physically and verbally harassed as they attempt to visit with friends and family, and others report being arrested for sitting on the sidewalk. During the Republican convention, wholesale "sweeps" were made and hundreds of minority and low-income residents tossed in jail, without charges. According to respected attorneys nationwide, police perjury to justify wholesale deprivation of rights and cover up the same is at an all-time high.

There's only one way to stop state-sponsored terror, and it entails people refusing to allow it. It is part of the Black Panther Ten Point program. You and I must take a close look at the power and rights we have lost in the name of "national security" and public "protection." We must ask if we are more secure as a nation or as individuals than we were in the past, and demand that the economics of poverty, disease, homelessness and joblessness be addressed progressively. We have no national security as long as our children can go hungry, we can get sick and receive no care, our families can become homeless, our youth can remain illiterate and drugged, and any one of us can be apprehended and beaten by police uncontrolled by law at any time for being the wrong color, in the wrong neighborhood. We must say "no" and demand the full extent of our constitutional rights and take up the call of the old Black Panther Party.

All Power to the People!

THE BILL OF RIGHTS
Amendments to the Constitution of the United States (Declared in force Dec. 15, 1791)

Article I.
Religious Establishment Prohibited. Freedom of Speech, of the Press, and Right to Petition.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Article II.
Right to Keep and Bear Arms.

A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

Article III.
No Soldier to Be Quartered in Any House, Unless, Etc.

No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Article IV
Right of Search and Seizure Regulated.

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and

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Huey's Corner

Uniting Against the Common Enemy

The present fact is that we cannot ask our grandparents to teach us some "native" tongue, or dance or point out our "homeland" on a map.... Our hopes for freedom then lie in the future, a future which may hold a positive elimination of national boundaries and ties....
October 17, 1971

What does the Black Panther Party mean when we say that we are revolutionary intercommunalists? In a few words, we believe that the world's people form a collection of communities, all dominated or controlled, either directly or indirectly, by the United States, by those few who rule the United States. The most common definition for a nation (as opposed to a community) is a group of human beings who have in common their own land or territory, economic system, culture (or way of day-to-day living), language, etc. At one time men from one nation would go out, and through warfare, conquer other nations. The conquerors would bring under their control the resources, the people, perhaps everything that was sovereign or sacred to the other nation. A variety of things would result: A government of the conquering nation might be established on the territory of the conquered nation; the foreign language may be imposed upon the people; the name of the nation might be changed; or most importantly, the economy of the conquered nation would be fully controlled by the conquerors.

"National" Boundaries

Sometimes a nation is very small; sometimes, very large. But in this way, through these wars, the earth's people have over a very long period of time become divided up according to "national" boundaries, in varying ways at different times in history. These wars of conquest have changed world maps, or what one land mass is called. Sometimes one would look at a certain area and it might have a different name or boundary line, depending upon the date of the map (and sometimes, who printed it). We can remember such terms as the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Byzantine Empire. We can remember Columbus "discovering" America (or, as he thought, India); and certainly some changes in national sovereignty have been made since then.

U.S. Empire Dominates

Today, things are different. The entire earth's land mass is known to man. The twentieth century's two world wars have complicated things even more as to the national question.. Technology is so advanced that places about which we had only heard in the past are immediately reachable in person. Today a person can travel completely around the world in less than a day 's time. If we bring all these past and present facts together with other information the world begins to look a little different. What else do we need to remember: that in the area of technology, the United States is the most highly advanced country; that a territory as large as China, containing within its boundaries one quarter of the entire earth's population, cannot either lay claim to its own former province, Taiwan, or participate in an organization supposedly representative of all "nations" in the world, the United Nations; that most former empires, such as France, Germany, Italy, Britain, have lost their former holdings (the French have been run out of Vietnam and Algeria; the British, out of India; the Germans, out of Russia and Poland; the Italians, out of Ethiopia etc.). The point is that only one country stands as the sovereign stronghold, dominating and threatening the sovereignty of all other people and lands — it is the United States Empire. No people, no land, no culture, no National economy is safe from the long arm of the last remaining empire.

War Weapons of Conquest in the Hands of the U.S.

The situation is this: A people can look only backwards, to history, to really speak of its nation. We call these former nations communities. All these territories exist under the threat of being brought into or, in fact, being a part of the United States Empire. Some of the territories are liberated such as China. the northern halves of Korea and Vietnam, or Albania. But the weapons of conquest, the war weapons produced by modern technology, are in the hands of the United States. Not even a liberated territory can lay claim to sovereign control of its land, economy or people with this hanging over its head.

U.S. Blacks Were Never a Sovereign Nation

We Black people in the United States have always lived under this threat in our communities inside the United States. United States government control of our communities is not difficult to understand. For most of us it is difficult to imagine our lives without such domination. We have never controlled a land that was ours. We have never controlled our economy. We know of one culture, that as slaves. We know of one language, that of the slave master. Our sovereignty was not violated, for we United States Blacks were never a sovereign nation. It is true that we were snatched from African shores. The present fact is that we cannot ask our grandparents to teach us some "native" tongue, or dance or point out our "homeland" on a map. Certainly, we are not citizens of the United States. Our hopes for freedom then lie in the future, a future which may hold a positive elimination of national boundaries and ties; a future of the world, where human world society may be so structured as to benefit all the earth's people (not peoples).

To achieve this end, we struggle here inside the United States to get rid of our oppression. Others struggle inside their territorial boundaries to rid of oppression. The more territory we liberate in the world, the closer we will come to an end to all oppression. The common factor that binds us all is not only the fact of oppression but the oppressor: the United States Government and its ruling circle. We, people of the world, have been brought together under strange circumstances. We are united against a common enemy. Today the philosophy of revolutionary intercommunalism dictates that the survival programs implemented by and with the people here in America and those same basic People's Survival Programs being implemented in Mozambique, by the Mozambique Liberation Front are essential to bringing about world unity, from Africa to the Black community inside America, developing and uniting against a common enemy. That enemy has rolled up into one large hand the power of the world. If we get rid of this enemy in a united common struggle it will be easy to transform this unity into a common scheme of things. We are not separate nations of men to continue the pattern of fighting amongst ourselves. We are a large collection of communities who can unite and fight together against our common enemy. The United States' domination over all our territories equals a reactionary (in opposition to the interests of all) set of circumstances among our communities:Reactionary Intercommunalism. We can transform these circumstances to all our benefit: Revolutionary Intercommunalism.

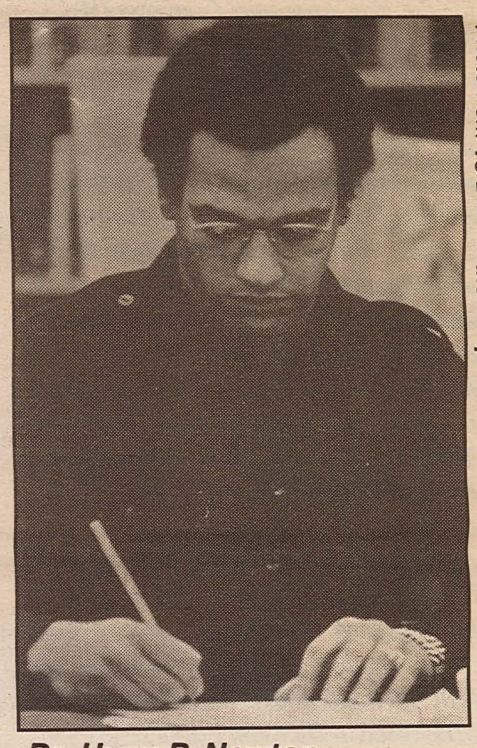

Photo from **To Die for the People**

Dr. Huey P. Newton

On the continent of Africa there are people who look like us. They are Black. We are brothers because our struggle is common. We have both suffered under White racism and under oppression. This is why we should not let the reactionaries of the world be the only ones communicating across the waters and masses of land. We have a common interest to serve, and therefore, we can learn from each other. What happens in here affects our brothers in Africa; What happens in Africa affects us. The United States has seen to this. But this is good. We can learn to fight together, though separated.

(Article taken from **To Die For The People** *[p. 207], by Dr. Huey P. Newton.)*

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International Update

Interview with Nozipo Bam Glenn of the Pan Africanist Congress

(Editor's note: Nozipo Bam Glenn, United States, mid-west representative for the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), is an adament fighter for self-determination, who was "kicked out" of her native country from (South Africa/Azania) by that country's white nationalist, separatist government in 1972. She graduated from Fort Hare University, located in a small village outside of Cape Town, where such African luminaries as Zimbabwe President's Robert Mugabe attended. Since her political exile, she has lived in the United States, and has attended Fisk University, in Nashville, Tennessee, and has worked at Meharry Medical College. Currently she's writing a book, lecturing throughout the America's mid-west and Europe, and lives in Dayton, Ohio. She regularly returns to her country.)

NBG:(Nozipo Bam Glenn PAC)
MD: (Melvin Dickson, Editor)
GJ: (Gary Johnson, Managing Editor)
CC: (Claude Clark, volunteer)

MD: You're saying things that we, perhaps, would like to get into our paper, things that our reading audience would like to hear....

GJ: We had South African students here, and they talked to us about one man, one vote and the "victory." We did not want to antagonize them. We wanted to just tell them...but we did try to educate them about the history of black liberation struggle in this country, and that we have achieved one man, one vote. We have civil rights now. We can now sit at the lunch counter and eat next to white people. But we don't have money to sit at that lunch counter anymore, and we never gained control of our economic stability and security. We won that. And that one man, one vote is not the end. As long as the resources of a nation, and the wealth of a nation, rest in the hands of someone else, you can never be satisfied.

NBG: My great grandmother told us all the time; she never, ever said she wanted to vote. She only said: she wanted her land back. That's what she told us. She never talked about voting, because she understood that voting, sure. "Go ahead, vote. What are you voting for? 'I want to vote so I can build myself a factory?' Where you going to build it at if you don't own the land? 'I want to open up a little business.' Where you're put it if you don't own the land?" The land is the cardinal point. That's what the PAC has always stood for — the land. And they stole it. They came from Holland. They came from England. They came from Germany. They came from Portugal. They came from all these European countries and stole our land, just like they did in this country.

I been here twenty-four years, so I can see the similarities. We have our own Columbus, Jan Van Ribe. He was a Dutchman. He came April 6, 1652, he landed there. We didn't invite him. He was uninvited. He came unannounced. He didn't call, and say, can he come over, you know. He did not write a letter and say: "Please can I come over?" He just showed up. And normally, in term of etiquette, you know, to just

He did not write a letter and say: "Please can I come over?" He just showed up.

show, and then stay, and then take. This is basically what he did. It the same thing that Columbus did. I tell people we got the same holidays. I've seen it in this country. We have similar holidays, like here you have Thanksgiving, where the Pilgrims are thanking their God for allowing them to steal this country. The same thing, we have holidays, sometimes they call it a different name. Sometime they call it Degun's Day, King Degun. It's December 16, or they call it the Day of the Covenant. On December 16, the Boers, the Afrikaners (they are all Dutch descendants, they prayed to their God; they made a covenant with their God. They said to their God that if they defeat these Zulus, we'll work for you God, be your servants forever, follow you forever and ever). So on December 16 they killed so many Zulu people that a river changed into blood. That was the blood of the people. In Zulu — even today: named that river Blood River. They named it after that day. The King's name was King Degun. Sometimes they call it Degun's Day. If you're an outsider, you'll said, "Oh, Degun Day. Oh maybe this is his birthday." But this is the day they defeated Degun.

GJ: What happened to that history?

NBG: Why do people not remember it?

It is deliberately wiped out so we won't...so it will happen again. Exactly. You see the Jew would say holocaust, holocaust, holocaust, every five minutes, so you don't forget. In other words so you won't forget, you won't do it any more. In our case they say forget it, you see. Because if we forget, they will do it again. So every December 16, they celebrate. They call it the Day of the Covenant. Because they made this Covenant with their God, just like Thanksgiving. So they thank their God for allowing them to kill all the Zulu people, and defeating them. You see a lot of similarities. It's very similar. Like the reservations. When I come, especially to this part of the country, and see reservations. It the same thing they used to call native reserves, and later on it was called homelands. The homelands are what they use to call native reserves. It is where they take Africans and lump them in a little dry, dreary area, that has nothing, where you can't really survive. And then, also, other similarities. There's a whole bunch here and I'm going to read it in the news or something. They call the native Americans alcoholics, but

Photo by Claude Clark

Melvin Dickson,* Commemorator *Editor and Gary Johnson, Managing Editor, express solidarity with Nozipo Bam Glenn, Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

they did the same thing at home. The first thing they did, they moved Africans from their original area and throw them somewhere. The first building that would be completed is what they call a beer hall, like a liquor store — the same thing in the African communities here. If you not from here, just drive around. If you see an area with a lot of liquor stores, you know that's a black community. Because they build them in our community. But if you go to the rich white suburb, you don't find any liquor stores. Then, they turn it around and say we're alcoholics, we're drug addicts, we're this or that. Like I was telling you earlier, I feel that the experiments are done here first on the Africans here first, and they are used as a guinea pig, and if the experiment succeeds, then they export it and do it at home in Africa. I remember when I was younger. Once the people here realized that they didn't need any lightening creams and bleaching creams. Guess what they did with all that stuff you wouldn't buy any more? They shipped it to Africa. It's the same thing. It's the same perpetrator. Right?

So I strongly feel that as long as we do not reclaim our land, we're going to continue being treated that way. If we decide that "Oh we want our diamonds." How can we say we want our diamonds? Where are the diamonds at? They are under the land. So if we don't own the

We have to own the land. We have to take it back. If I steal that cap (pointing to the cap G.J. was wearing), I don't care if I keep it and give it to my grandchildren, it's still your cap.

land, then we don't own the diamonds. There's no point even saying you want your diamond mines back, if you don't own the land. We have to own the land. We have to take it back. If I steal that cap (pointing to the cap G.J. was wearing) I don't care if I keep it and give it to my grandchildren, it's still your cap. I stole it. And your great grand children should come and get the cap back from my great grand children because I stole it. It does not change the fact that foreigners came and stole our land. Until we clear that, there's nothing else to talk about.

GJ: But they would like to say, "OK,

Continued on next page

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Interview: PAC

Continued from previous page

that was done; it was bad, but let's take it from where we are now."

NBG: No, we have to start from...we haven't dealt with the root of the problem. The root of the problem is not a bunch of things, it's you stole our land, we want it back. I should decide who gets to stay there and who gets to go.

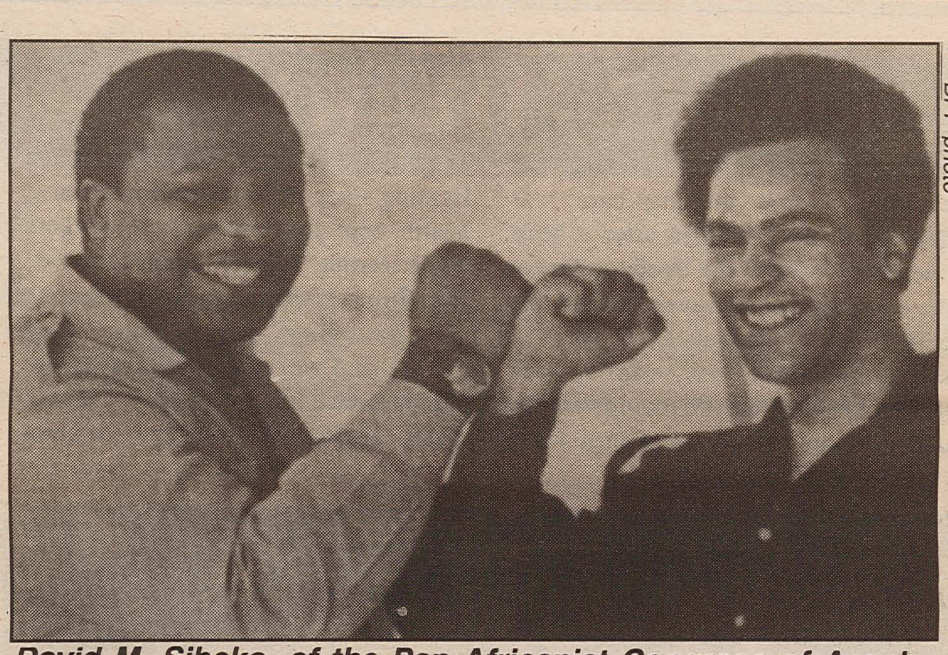
CC: At least now you can still see it. In India you can't even see the people anymore. Other than blue eyes, they are all brown and black, and the Brahmans just insist on keeping the caste system, even if they belong to the Communist Party, they still believe in the caste.

GJ: What's with the South African Communist Party? Who took over from Chris Hani after he was killed?

NBG: The Communist Party is really quiet. Chris is gone, and then Joe Slovo died. It's really quiet. I don't really know what they're doing right now. It's kind of real quiet. A lot of things, like I said, due to the euphoria that was created from the outside. The whole thing about the election, the negotiations, all that... that was menu cooked elsewhere, from the outside, from the United States, Britain, France, and the so-called allies. It was not our idea. We never had that idea; it came from them. The way I see it, if I invite you to come to my house for dinner, I'm going to choose the time you're going to come. When you get there, you may ring the bell at the front door, and if I had white carpet and I don't want you to make it dirty, I'll tell you to come to the side door, or the back door, and you've no choice, you have to go around to the door. When you get in there, I'll decide if you sit in the kitchen, or in the dining room, or in the living room; I'll decide which room or in the patio, I'll decide; when you get in the house I'll tell you which seat you should sit on. When it's time for eating, I'll say you sit here and you sit there, and I'll sit at the end of the table. It doesn't matter if the chair is comfortable or uncomfortable for you. It's my house. When someone is inviting you for dinner, they're not going to ask you what you want them to cook. They're going to cook what they want to cook. It may disagree with you, it might give you indigestion or diarrhea. But you must be polite, because you're a guest, and you're going to eat it. You know what I mean? So, the whole negotiations scenario, the whole democracy scenario, is always shoved down Africans' throat. Everybody is telling us, "Oh , you have to take democracy, democracy, democracy." Well, what is democracy? What is this democracy they're talking about? If democracy is what I see in the United States, then I don't want it. Nobody asked us. The PAC, at one point, was stressing that when time came for negotiations, then it should be outside the country. It should not be on De Klerk's territory, that it should be a neutral convener and a neutral chairman. Well, that did not happen. It was in Johannesburg. Johannesburg is right there in the easiest territory. And to show you how crucial that was, the right wingers, one day just took their cars and drove them into that building (remember that?), which showed that doing it in DeKlerk's territory was a big mistake. They could have killed anybody, anytime they wanted to. And the other thing that happened around May when they were right in the middle of the negotiations, all the members, the higher members of the PAC, were arrested, including the members in the negotiations. They're supposed to be all equals, right? They say, "We have a level playing field." Now this is supposed to be a level playing field, but that night they were arrested, and their computers were taken, everything was taken, their homes, their offices — everything. And a few days later they are back on the "level playing field." Now, tell me, if I let you understand up here (*pointing to her head*), that there's the possibility that I can arrest you anytime I want to, you think you're going to be negotiating with me as an equal? No!

When you're sitting, wondering, "Is she going to arrest me again, is she going to arrest me right now, should I disagree with her real strongly? Should she disapprove, is she going to call her police?" — It's not a level playing field. So that whole negotiation was lop-sided. They talk about a "level playing field." I say, the "field," it does not belong to us. The game they are playing does not belong to us. We did not even ask to play the game. We say, we don't know the rules. It's their rules. The referee is on their side.

Everybody. Even the crowd is on their side, because the rest of the world was applauding while we were indeed a colony. So the whole thing was lop-sided. The chairman and the conveners, who were they? They were the same judges who had been sentencing us to death, who had been sentencing us to jail, for life.



BPP photo

David M. Sibeko, of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, meets with Huey P. Newton, in 1972.

"...if I invite you to come to my house for dinner, I'm going to choose the time you're going to come."

"Everybody is telling us, "Oh , you have to take democracy, democracy, democracy." Well, what is democracy? What is this democracy they're talking about? If democracy is what I see in the United States, then I don't want it."

"The game they are playing does not belong to us. We did not even ask to play the game. We say, we don't know the rules. It's their rules. The referee is on their side."

Continued next Issue

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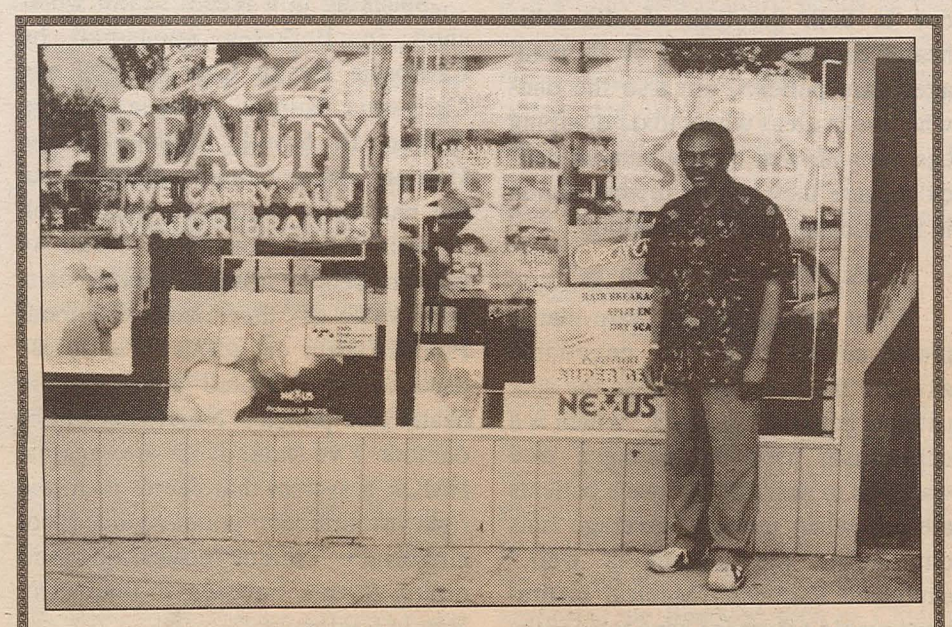

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Health Genocide

Continued from page 1

California to Massachusetts tell of abuses that occur as even the most ordinary health care needs of the working poor and their families, as well as minority, disabled and elderly people, go unfilled.

In rural Berkshire County, Massachusetts, installation of managed care systems has also caused the consolidation and merging of hospitals, which workers report has resulted in a cut in all the service to low-income patients, particularly emergency and sub-acute care.

In Boston, a major medical center of the nation, the Boston Medical Center was created to provide a "free care pool" for the poor, even though its insiders admit "there is no money in it." Meanwhile, infectious disease rates are up in Boston's poor communities, just as they are across the country. Public Health officials report alarming rates of strep infections, and whooping cough, while tuberculosis is at epidemic levels and spreading rapidly. Deaths caused by curable and preventable diseases are occurring at rates unprecedented in the last twenty years. Coverage rates charged by Health Maintenance Organizations are climbing everywhere to unaffordable levels. Meanwhile, reimbursement rates of Medicaid for managed care corporate contracts have dropped from 47 cents on every dollar to 27 cents on the dollar. Many experts predict 50% of the nation's hospitals will soon be closed down. The country is approaching a medical catastrophe due to policies that favor pursuit of profits to enrich HMOs and insurance corporations, and the very few who control them.

In rural and poor Wayne County, New York, where premature release from the hospital is common practice, as it is becoming all over the country, the number of unnecessary deaths at home post release is reported by community workers to be increasing. For example, home nursing care was denied an older woman after a heart operation because she lived too far for the county nurse to travel. Instead, the patient was expected to care for herself at home. She soon ended up back in the hospital due to complications that doctors said would not have occurred with proper care, and she died there.

Courtesy of Women's Cancer Resource Center

Volunteers at the Berkeley Women's Cancer Resource Center come together to discuss health needs.

As HMOs and insurance companies focus on what they call "cost cutting" measures which increase profits, examinations are often denied, and pharmaceutical prescriptions are likewise under-filled. Many pharmacists refuse to fill prescriptions under these HMOs because the HMOs only reimburse them at the wholesale price the pharmacist paid for the drug.

Health Care Fight Picks Up Steam

"Fifteen billion dollars a year flow through California's Medi-Cal program. The chance to get hold of that $15 billion is driving a handful of powerful, corporate medical entities, in collusion with county, state and federal government bodies, into overtly illegal action under color of law," stated Michaele Ramirez, Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals Operations Manager. CCMP has been fighting since 1976 for comprehensive health care for low-income workers while leading the fight against the various forms of managed care and health care rationing, which deny low-income and working people adequate health care.

In addition, a number of San Francisco Bay Area health organizations, sponsored by the California Consumer Health Care Council, recently initiated a fight to stop profit-driven HMOs from depriving citizens of their rights to health care, just as a number of East Bay environmental organizations sponsored by the Women's Cancer Resource Center kicked off the fight to stop profit-driven toxic dumping corporations from polluting their communities.

Some of the same groupings of people who suffer illness and death due to both the lack of affordable health care services and HMO-managed care policies, are also the ones who live in areas where toxic dumping has been allowed by government policy because they had no representation in the decision for the dumping.

Sick Patients in "Grooves"

When patients require care that is more costly than the negotiated amount, the hospitals release the sick patients in to the "grooves," which is a euphemism used by managed care watchers to describe the place patients are left when medical coverage runs out before the patient is well," explained Ramirez. "Medical institutions would otherwise have to bear the extra cost themselves, which is not good for the profit margin.

"HMOs and the managed care approach inhibit doctors from freely discussing a patient's treatment," and make it hard for patients to get a second opinion on their illness. In fact some HMOs forbid their doctors from informing their patients of the availability of more expensive forms of treatment," stated Ramirez.

In San Diego, the largest corporate hospital conglomerate in the country, Columbia HCA, needs only clearance from the state Attorney General's Office to proceed with takeover of Sharp, a group of six Kearny Mesa-based, non-profit hospitals. Columbia is also seeking negotiation with the UC Board of Regents to take control of University of California at San Diego's medical centers in Hillcrest and La Jolla. Area consumer advocates have expressed concern that Columbia/HCA, beholden only to its shareholders and not subject to public accountability, will implement business decisions that will lead to the dumping of indigent-care programs.

The San Diego Birthing Project, a 2 year old program which seeks to reduce the inordinately high infant death rate among some groups of needy women, particularly African-American women, was notified by Sharp officials that the Project's financial support and use of Sharp's southeastern San Diego facilities will end. Sharp backed off this position after the San Diego Union-Tribune began making inquiries about the program's status.

Government Connections

In January, 1993, the federal government, in violation of Title XIX of the Social Security Act, set in place the for-profit HMO takeover of Medi-Cal in 12 of California's largest counties by granting the state government's request for a "freedom of choice" waiver. In addition, the Federal District Court of New York ruled against 20 Long Island, New York anesthesiologists who filed a lawsuit which challenged the right of Aetna Life and Casualty Company to dictate patient care over medical decisions. The doctors alleged that Aetna's practice violated antitrust law.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, medical professionals are facing a health care crisis, which is especially evident in the East Bay counties, where six hospitals have closed in the last ten years.

Speaking at a recent health workshop in Berkeley sponsored by California Health Care Council and California Nurses Association, Dr. Tolbert B. Small, founder of the Harriet Tubman Clinic in Oakland and the nationally acclaimed Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, said, "With 44 million people without health care, and 14% of the Gross National Product spent on health care, people need to be educated about current health care policies. Ninety percent of doctors I've talked to are against HMOs, a system that denies them the right to criticize policies, does not emphasize patient education, and offers doctors bonuses if they deny certain treatments."

'Non-Profit' to 'For-Profit'

Today, managed care is growing at a phenomenal rate; 75% of physicians in the U.S. practice in the context of some form of managed care. Blue Cross of California changed their status from "non-profit" to "for-profit", to be able to sell stock to generate the billions of dollars in capital necessary to buy pharmacies, labs, hospitals, and other facilities, and thereby keep from being forced out of business by other health care giants. Mergers and downsizing, where health professionals and workers are losing status and power, are forming and regulating the most tightly structured forms of managed care, such as the Kaiser Plan.

Continued on next page

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Health Genocide

Continued from previous page

In 1994, the top 10 HMO CEOs made a total of 2.4 billion dollars while the HMOs collectively spent only 1.4 million dollars on AIDS research. "The robber barons are in control now, but eventually people will see through this manipulation and rise up to fight against it," stated Dr. Small.

The Black Panther Party:

"The Black Panther Party, through its Ten Point Program, advocated comprehensive health care for all poor and oppressed people 25 years ago," stated Dickson, *Commemorator* editor. "We understood then, just as people are beginning to understand today, that comprehensive health care is like living wage jobs and affordable housing; it is a fundamental right worth fighting for. And that's why we continue to uphold the Black Panther Party Ten Point Program, because none of these issues, affordable health care, the privatization of public services, toxic dumping, are unrelated, and none can be addressed without building an organized fight from the bottom up, independent of the forces that are promulgating these deadly policies.

Stand Together and Fight

"When scientific facts show the link between poverty and disease, and government with both the money and the power to end that poverty, and therefore the social and physical death, disease and destruction it causes, refuses to end the poverty, it is condemning the poor to die."

By systematically approving the denial of treatment to the sick, by the systemic removal of protection of poor and low-income families and their communities, this government is, by commission and omission, practicing genocide.

The poor have two choices — stand by and die, or stand together and fight.

Power to the People!

Captive Audience

Continued from page 5

tion, social oppression and political marginalization of the underclass by the overclass, but are also the material conditions which give rise to gang culture as a specific reaction.

The military aspect of the contradiction which adds to the generation of gang culture lies in the fact that the politically enacted rules, i.e., legal infrastructure, supporting economic exploitation, social oppression, political marginalization and military repression of the underclass by the ruling class, who makes the rules because they own the gold, must be enforced through military repression, which begins with the local, state and national police, court officers, and prison guards, backed up by the national guard and armed forces

The April 29, 1992, Los Angeles uprising in the wake of the first Rodney King beating trial verdict emphasized the revolutionary potential of certain gangs that are becoming more politicized. It was particularly alarming to the ruling class when gang troops stood at the head of a body of community support opposing continued subjugation of the underclass community in the form of business as usual. The L.A. uprising must be understood through the following grid: (1) police brutality, double-standard unequal justice, low income and high prices for inferior products brought about a broad-based community alliance; (2) these contradictions were understood by the underclass community as an economic, social, political and military problem which could be tactically addressed by paramilitary collective action; (3) gangs as the best organized sector of the underclass community became the tactical leadership and advance guard in execution of military action sanctioned by the oppressed community.

The ruling class views certain gang elements not only as guerrilla armies in waiting, but more importantly as a potential political force capable of advancing a potentially revolutionary economic and social agenda that can capture the imagination of large sectors of the population. The ruling class' total police state apparatus is now leveled against what they perceive as revolutionary gang potential, inside and outside of prison, and has embarked on a national mission inside of prisons financed by federal dollars, to round up and isolate anyone who can be characterized falsely or truly as someone belonging to a gang.

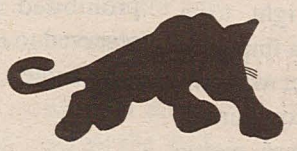
Special high-security isolation units have been set aside which rely heavily on sensory deprivation and political police brainwashing methodology. The only way out of these units is to be released from prison, become an informant, or die.

These are modern-day examples of the same fundamental method used by the ruling class of this country in the past to deny constitutionally protected freedom of association and destroy political and labor organizations in the past, sabotaging efforts of working people to work together to advance themselves. In this instance, federal prison appropriations are used to separate off gang leaders and pit gang members against each other, just as COINTELPRO operations were used to separate leaders of the Black Panther Party from their constituencies and from each other through agent provocateurs, stool pigeons and other dirty tricks and illegal schemes.

The captive audiences of the country are just that; against a powerful adversary under such circumstances, gangs will be effectively prevented from serving as the tactical leadership of the portions of the underclass which periodically find themselves incarcerated. Better than nothing, we need better and more sophisticated organization still.

All power to the people.

Help!



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Letters to the Editor

Continued from page 5

A few months ago Governor Pete Wilson was on the news announcing that school classroom size would have to be cut, but about a month later the California Department of Corrections was trying to convince Crescent City to allow it to build a Pelican Bay II. The money to build the prison is there, but there's not enough money to build a school.

In my opinion the anti-crime rhetoric is a big push to continue to legally make slavery a profitable business enterprise. For example, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says that it is legal to put a person in servitude if they are duly convicted of a crime. Now I understand why Sister Souljah got so much publicity when she said the government was making slavery legal again.

I would like to start getting *the Commemorator* here at Pelican Bay.

Sincerely,
Colvin McCright B-08892
Pelican Bay State Prison
Crescent City, CA.

Set the Record Straight

Dear Comrades,

It's been a while since my last letter to you, but it is my delight to write again. In my last letter to *The Commemorator,* I had laid out my position as to who and what I was to the Black Panther Party, and offered to the unrecognized working strata my organizational skills on the shores of North America to help free us from the false belief, notion or ideology that people will find peace and freedom under the norms of capitalism. It is this struggle that has been on the vanguard of the revolution almost thirty years now.

During my incarceration in New York's upstate prison system I have reviewed the political machine from a different perspective, as well as collecting data to expose the lies that these Hollywood actors, politicians on the local, regional and national level, are selling for capital gain for the rich. Yes, my Brothers and Sisters, time is near; may we set the record straight once and for all.

In the last issue of *The Commemorator*, there was an article that I was really moved by, "If you want to get rich, start a prison."

Being in prison myself, I am the product of the exploitation they call the justice system. The fact is, only about 10% of the entire New York State prison population is incarcerated as a result of a guilty verdict. The remaining prisoners are inside as a result of cop-outs or pleas, better known as railroading cases, which fall in the intercoordinated departments of the police, Legal Aid, the District Attorney and judge. These are policies implemented by mayors, and other local political officials and sold to the public by the governors and other regional and national public representatives.

Prison labor has become one of the largest work forces in the United States, with wages ranging from sixteen to thirty-two cents per hour. These are wages for highly skilled work tasks or positions. It is also all at the expense of the taxpayers who receive no share of this large profit-making business.

We have come from getting whipped in the fields for our lack of participation in this system, to being placed under keylock and hit with five dollar surcharges for those of us who see it for what it is, and want no part of it.

What a way to get rich, on someone else's blood, sweat and tears. This is an outright assault on the American public's intelligence and pursuit of life. I have had to humble myself beyond anyone's belief. I used the last few months of my time here to begin the ground work on the attack of the Criminal Justice System to expose it for what it is. If you or I don't speak out on it now, sooner or later you will also become a slave to this capital game.

My Brothers and Sisters, I would like to see this letter in a copy of the next issue of *The Commemorator.*

In Struggle,
Mr. Coleman V. Haynes

Frightened

Continued from page 6

no warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Article V.
Provisions Concerning Prosecution, Trial and Punishment — Private Property Not to Be Taken for Public Use, Without Compensation.

No person shall be held to answer for a capital or other infamous crime unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service, in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Article VI.
Right to Speedy Trial, Witnesses, Etc.

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which districts shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Article VII.
Right of Trial by Jury.

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any court of the United States than according to the rules of the common law.

Article VIII.
Excessive Bail or Fines and Cruel Punishment Prohibited.

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Article IX.
Rule of Construction of Constitution.

The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Article X:
Rights of States Under Constitution.

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

The Truth

Continued from page 3

sion will be appealed before Pennsylvania's high court, which has, since February been deliberating Judge Sabo's previous adjudication which denied Abu-Jamal's Post-Conviction Relief (PCRA) petition.

"These violations of Jones' constitutional and human rights show, once again, that equal justice for poor and minority people does not exist in the U.S.," said the *Commemorator* editor, Melvin Dickson. "Jones' treatment is no less indicative of the times than O.J. Simpson's comparative 'white glove' treatment. The disparity between rich and poor in the U.S. courts is highlighted and cannot be ignored when speaking of justice, which is non-existent for the working people of our nation.

"We must continue to fight to free all of our political prisoners, in the context of fighting for the Black Panther Ten Point program. As Dr. Huey P. Newton said, 'A people who are not free cannot free its political prisoners'."

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CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPP) as outlined in its Ten Point Program which was written in 1966 by Party founders, Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten Point Program outlines goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working class communities in the U.S. and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is reactionary intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized U.S. because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation).

CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

Black Panther Party 10-Point Program
WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

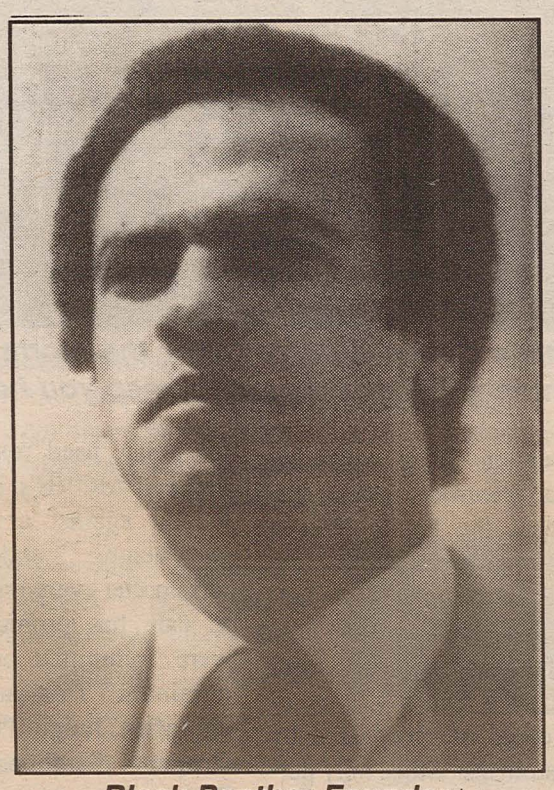
1. WE WANT FREEDOM, WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all of its people and give a high standard of living.

3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency which will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people on our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.



Black Panther Founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities which will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color and poor people inside the United States. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U. S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U. S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND POOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U. S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U. S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U. S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions which are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons are brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

MOVE/Bombing

Continued from page 1

in the mostly black working-class neighborhood, and even two conflicting statements by one resident, show how little was resolved by this latest attempt to ease the mistrust Philadelphians feel toward their government and its agents. Public school teacher Clifford Bond, a former block captain widely quoted during relief efforts in the aftermath of the bombing, said, "I feel good about somebody being held accountable," but also termed the $1.5 million award against the City of Philadelphia "an insult." Another resident ominously warned, "This will happen again."

More Officials Should Have Been Tried

No one echoed former Philadelphia Mayor Wilson Goode's statement, "I believe that this should conclude the *matter in the eyes of the complainants*, and I hope that it brings to a conclusion the long history of May 13, 1985." It was Goode, Philadelphia's first black mayor, who used MOVE's support to get elected and then presided over the MOVE bombing and slaughter, as well as the subsequent holocaust that leveled a neighborhood.

In fact, jurors freely announced after the trial that they felt more city officials should have been on trial for the murderous bombing, such that there would be an opportunity or render verdicts against them.

Goode, who stated at the time of the MOVE bombing that he would take all responsibility for ordering the high-explosive attack, testified at the trial that Police Commissioner Sambor betrayed him by failing to carry out the plan the mayor had directed. Goode neither paid any compensation or penalty nor suffered any legal or administrative repercussions as a result.

By What Authority?

Unanswered throughout the trial are such questions of accountability as, who ordered the firing of 10,000 rounds of ammunition at people fleeing a burning building? Who authorized procurement of the bomb and then its use? Who ordered the fire department to stand by and watch the fire spread from the bombed building to the entire neighborhood before making any effort to put it out?

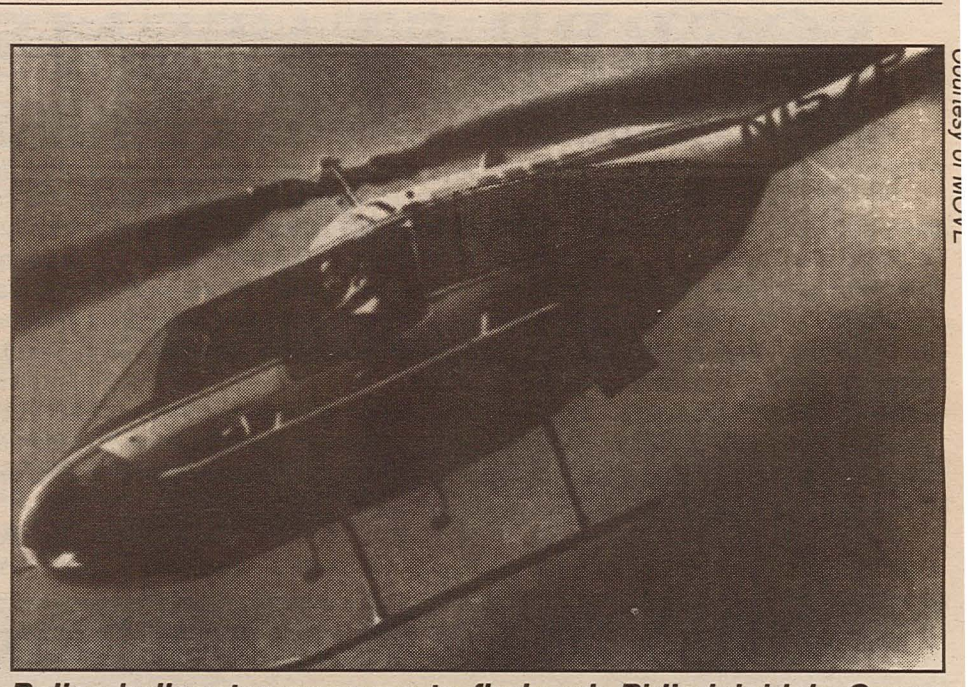
The occasional denunciations of Ramona Africa for "bringing all this trouble into the neighborhood" ignore the history of support MOVE had enjoyed from an entire community when it was the primary focus of police harassment and persecution under Police Commissioner, later Mayor, Frank Rizzo. At that time, being pro-MOVE was synonymous with being anti-police-brutality. Only after a persistent press campaign isolated MOVE from its base of community support was it possible to drop a bomb and get away with it. This occurred not under Rizzo's administration, but under Goode's.

"Generalissimo Rizzo," as he called himself, openly enjoyed riding a horse brazenly into peaceful demonstrations, leading attacks on MOVE members and other black residents of Philadelphia with clubs and rifles, besieging buildings, and kicking, arrested men and women lying on the ground handcuffed. When trying to get back into office as mayor, running against Goode after the Cobbs Creek holocaust, Rizzo took the bizarre approach of labeling Goode "The Bomber," leaving most voters with the belief that the election of either candidate would have no positive impact on government or police attitude toward their neighborhoods.

Feds Torpedo Brutality Case

In 1979, a large number of police brutality civil rights lawsuits brought by individual victims and organizations against Philadelphia and its police department since the early 1970's had been consolidated into one civil rights suit by Drew S. Days III, head of the civil rights division of the United States Justice Department under Attorney General Griffin Bell. The Black United Front, led by politicians such as state legislator Dave Richardson and Congressman Bill Gray, which had marched and protested for MOVE against police brutality, was torn apart as a local force by this federal intervention. After collecting the files of a grassroots group, the police project of the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, containing some 1,500 citizen complaints, the federal lawyers proceeded to get the case dismissed on the pleadings. The error in the case, United States v. City of Philadelphia, could be recognized by first-year law students. Since only persons whose rights have been violated can sue for damages, the United States government can only prosecute criminally; this was a civil rights suit by a department of the federal government against a local police department. On June 21, 1981 the government dropped the case, allowing a 90-day deadline to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to expire. No one put an appeal together. The injured parties were left without recourse and without redress.

By that time, MOVE had dropped from the popular issues and headlines of the day. Although Rizzo's successor as mayor, William Green, ran a campaign against Rizzo's policies, police brutality continued under his administration with more than 500 complaints being filed each year.



Courtesy of MOVE

Police helicopter prepares to firebomb Philadelphia's Osage Avenue neighborhood, May 13, 1985.

People continued to fight their cases individually, sometimes with volunteer attorneys or legal information from grass-roots organizations who had not given up on the fight for justice and to stop the brutality.

Crimes But No Criminals

Because most of those in the responsible chain of command were ruled out as defendants in Ramona Africa's case, the jury's finding that the police used "excessive force and violated MOVE's constitutional protection against unreasonable search and seizure...," ended up echoing the refrain that every official investigation to date has promulgated: "Crimes were committed but there were no criminals." This was especially apparent after Judge Pollock ruled that Gregor Sambor and William Richmond could not be held *personally* liable for the incident.

A Mayor's Commission investigation and federal grand jury did nothing to explain *how* the government determined to bomb civilian residents, and bring the responsible parties to justice. The unthinkable became a precedent: An officially perpetrated act of aggression by a government against its own population in which human beings were killed, contrary to even the rules of civilized warfare, was rubber-stamped and allowed to go unaddressed and unpunished in the United States of America. It was an act some commentators called the first skirmish in the Second American Civil War.

Special Grand Jury Blocks Citizens' Inquiry

One year after the holocaust, a "special grand jury" to investigate the bombing was announced by then Philadelphia District Attorney Ronald D. Castille. Castille's announcement of grand jury formation followed within hours of the independent citizens' Philadelphia Fact Finding Committee call to formulate a special independent citizen panel of inquiry.

Meanwhile, an ad hoc Citizens' Relief Committee of Philadelphia, chaired by Judith Perez, was providing aid with food, clothing, hygiene supplies and other goods collected across the nation for the Cobbs Creek residents who had lost their homes and were being held in temporary shelters because the government refused to provide replacement housing. She, too, called for the formation of the Citizens Select Committee to conduct an independent investigation of the unprecedented air attack.

Citizens Committee efforts to acquire original footage of the helicopter raid were thwarted by fears of legal reprisal cited by private cameramen already approached by the Mayor's Commission. One media freelancer received a letter stating that he would not be permitted to give the materials to anyone, and that the Mayor's commission would obtain them by whatever means necessary — purchase or outright seizure.

The videographer-photographer sold his materials to the commission, along with exclusive rights to them, and was "well paid" for doing so. However, they were never shown to the public in the hearings as far as he could ascertain, and he regrets his loss of control and the suppression of what they depicted.

Was MOVE Controllable By "Normal" Means?

High on the Citizens Fact Finding Committee's agenda after 11 years of persistent demand for the truth is the question: To what does the city attribute its position that MOVE was uncontrollable by normal legal means of rectifying its misdemeanor-level law-breaking?

The evidence speaks against this analysis. MOVE member Larry Howard Africa was arrested August 5, 1984, by Philadelphia police — without incident — for a parole violation, three days before what city authorities

Continued on next page

Courtesy of MOVE

Philadelphia's Osage Avenue "after the storm" — the extent the government will go through to keep you hostage.

Courtesy of MOVE

August 8, 1978: Police attack MOVE headquarters.

Continued from previous page

alleged would be a confrontation with MOVE on the anniversary of a 1978 encounter with police in Powelton Village.

In that encounter, allegations of building code violations escalated to armed assault by the police. The brutal, televised, police beating of Delbert Africa followed one year later. La Verne Sims, former MOVE member and sister of John Africa, the group leader who was killed in the attack, testified before the commission that she pleaded with the mayor in July, 1984 before the holocaust, "Why not grab them all, take them into custody? We don't want anybody hurt or dead."

"The question that keeps coming up," Perez stated, "is that if the city officials had really wanted to gain access to the house, why is there no evidence of any legal attempt to do so in anything they did?"

Military Attack

"This was a military attack on a low-income, African-American working class neighborhood," said a member of the Citizens Fact Finding Committee. "The equipment used, the munitions, the legal requirements for use, the collusion of different levels of government, and the never-ending cover-up all show it. They made war on us. When Hitler's planes did that to Basque civilians during the Spanish Civil War, the whole world protested. Famous artists made paintings about it. Where has everyone been since we were bombed?"

Sgt. Edward Conner, the only helicopter crew member to not resort to the Fifth Amendment when subpoenaed, testified before Castille's Commission in 1986 that ex-Police Commissioner Sambor had given him permission to procure heavy military weapons from a private supplier.

One Citizens Fact Finding Committee technical consultant on the scene May 13 compared the color of the fire to that of aluminum halite-fed explosions such as those used in Vietnam. He commented that the 20,000 gallons of water pumped over the area before the helicopter's arrival would actually *accelerate* the spread of phosphorus fires.

Despite the war-like aggression on a domestic civilian population in peacetime, the award of monetary damages to bombing survivors will be paid entirely by city taxpayers, not the guilty parties. The precedent can now be used to permit other firebombings, because to this day, *no one has been found criminally liable except Ramona Africa!*

Willie Williams Cools Out Philly, Los Angeles

Goode sacked Police Commissioner Gregor Sambor after the holocaust and brought in Willie Williams who made some superficial reforms in the police department, and backed up Goode in keeping the low-income neighborhoods organized and channeled away from dissent and protest. After his Philadelphia performance, Williams was hired by the Los Angeles police department directly after the acquittal of the police officers who brutally beat Rodney King. His mandate was to "cool out" the full-scale protest and dissent that ended with 18,000 people swept off the street and into jail.

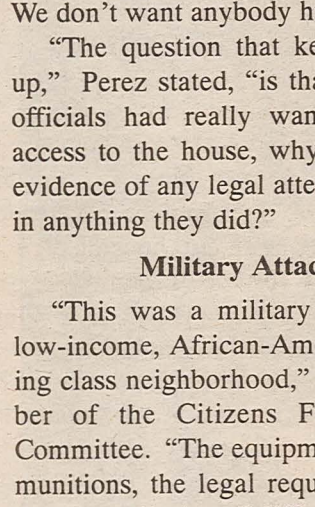
FBI Involvement Not Examined

Perez criticized Castille's March 6, 1986 report for "inadequate handling of the issue of FBI involvement in the incident." According to FBI Special Agent Wayne G. Davis, head of the Philadelphia FBI office, "We weren't regarding MOVE as a terrorist organization prior to May 13th and that has not changed." The commission report revealed the FBI provided Philadelphia's police department with over 35 pounds of military explosives in January 1985, due to a need "diagnosed" by federal agents.

The civil case left the blame on local officials, yet with no accountability owed by them to the people, and was not allowed to examine recorded FBI involvement in the decision to bomb, nor the federal clearance that would have been necessary for the city to obtain such weaponry.

"This clearly signals to law enforcement officials nationwide that the price tag will not be too high if they bomb and burn those they can tar with a brush like MOVE," said CCBPP Chairman Melvin Dickson. "We've since seen this done in Waco, Texas. Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) totally incinerated a compound, killing over 80 people, children included. Most recently, the FBI was lauded for its handling of the Freemen in Montana by getting their surrender without bloodshed, with no mention of the now well-established record of ruthless mass murder by federal law enforcement. Now, any racial, religious or political minority can be isolated and discredited in a media campaign, then attacked by bombing, tanks and armed assault."

When the houses on blocks bordering Osage Avenue were burned to the ground, and members of MOVE living in a house on that street were all killed but one, there was no voice or outrage, no protests, no marches in the streets. The fear was gripping, and no one wanted to be associated as a MOVE sympathizer.



Courtesy of MOVE

Ramona Africa, arrested May 13, 1985.

Fear Used To Create "Race Riot"

The bombing, fire and death of 11 people, including five children, terrorized the population to such a degree that the next year a mostly white neighborhood was thrown into a frenzy of hysteria when a black family moving into a house were rumored to be MOVE sympathizers. Mayor Goode declared a state of emergency there for what he called a "race riot"; violence had broken out against the couple inspired by agitators fearful that the black couple's presence would touch off another police raid in the neighborhood not unlike that of May 13 the previous year.

After the initial burst of publicity about Ramona Africa having her day in court and winning a judgment, the federal judge hearing the case overturned a civil jury's damage award of a $1 a week against Richmond and Sambor. Jury member Connie Erwin of Chester, Pennsylvania, had explained that "every time they sit down and write those checks, they will think about it," but Judge Pollock said in his opinion that neither of the two officials had committed "willful misconduct," and upheld a damage award that will be paid by the taxpayers. Clearly, the jury ruled otherwise, but the government and its appointed judge believes itself to be *above* the people, not of, for or by them.

No Organization — No Justice

Courtesy of MOVE

Tomaso, Tree and Netta Africa before their murder in the May 13, 1985 MOVE fire bombing.

Without strong organization to articulate a position and bring out community support, Ramona Africa and other plaintiffs have not obtained justice. The government's acts were so egregious they did win a damage award, which Ramona Africa defiantly proclaims is of no importance because it is justice and accountability she is after. There is outrage in the community — but without organization it has no face, no strength, no voice. A trial is no more and no less than a trial, unless the community is organized, united and committed to protect all its members against unlawful outside intervention in its affairs.

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BPP 30th Anniversary October 1966 to October 1996

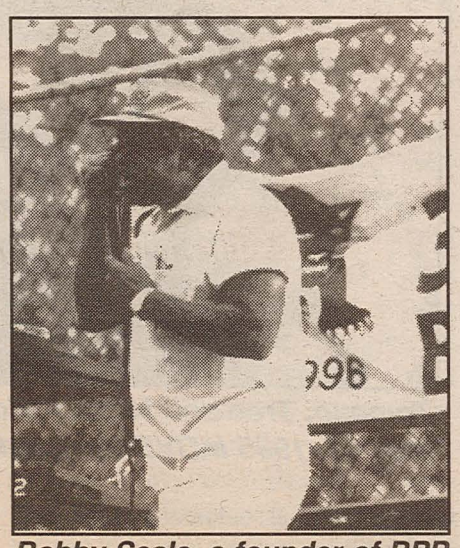
Former Black Panther members and supporters come together in Oakland's low-income community

All photos by Sekou Lebeaud

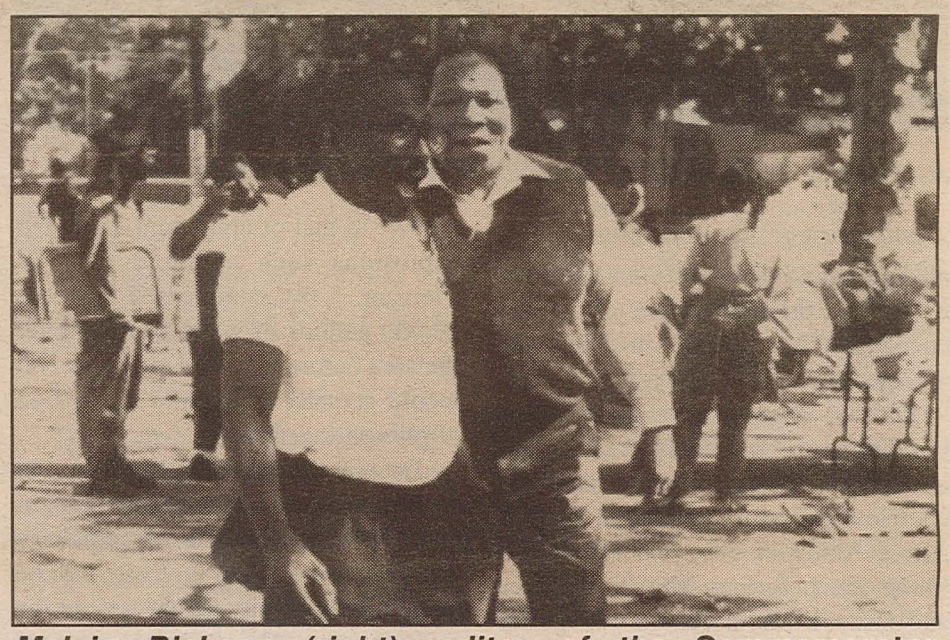
Former Black Panther Party members came to Oakland, California's Bushrod Park to celebrate BPP's 30th Anniversary. "It's About Time! Committee" organized a similar event for the 20th Anniversary, about 10 years ago as well.

Members of the Commemorator*'s volunteer staff, led by editor Melvin Dickson, joined other former BPP members at the event and staffed a literature table, talking with people about the need to organize now for fundamental change, consistent with the goals and principles of the Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program.*

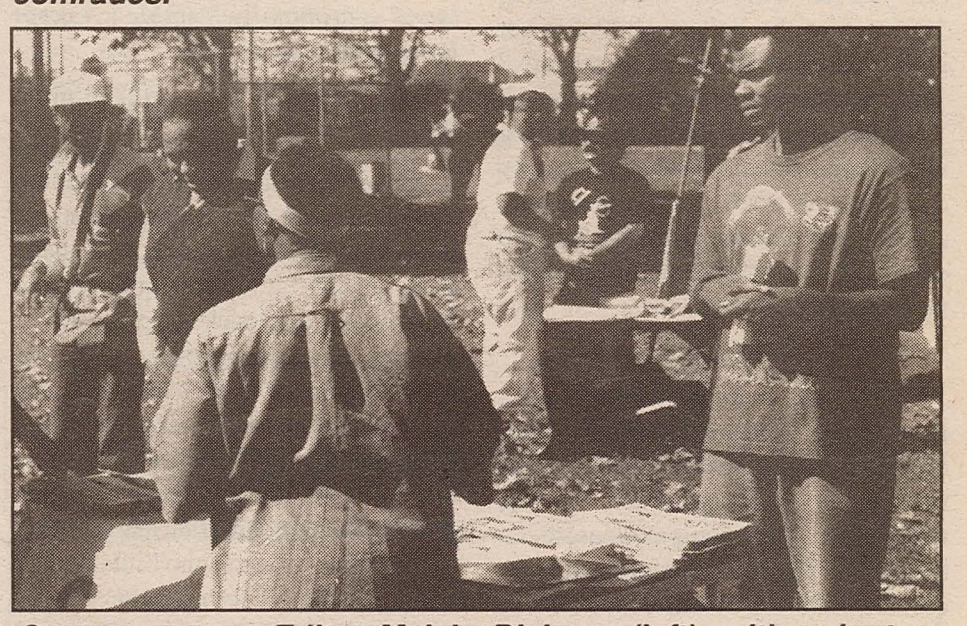
A part of the It's About-Time! celebration featured a free clothing closet, reminiscent of the BPP Ten-Point Program. Melvin Dickson pointed out the need not only for clothing, but also for food, medical care, housing, heat and other basic necessities of life for low-income black communities across the nation to build off the lessons of the past and to organize for lasting solutions.



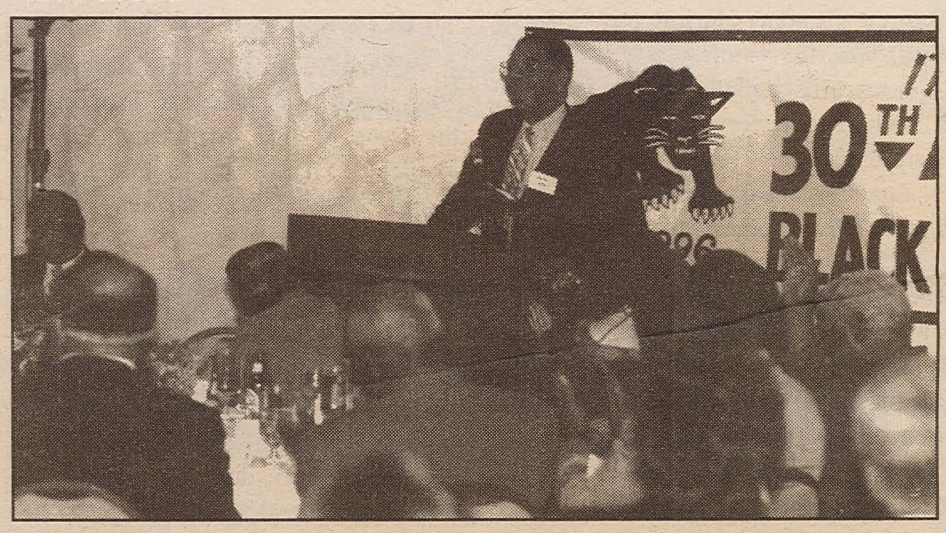
Bobby Seale, a founder of BPP, was invited to speak to the crowd.

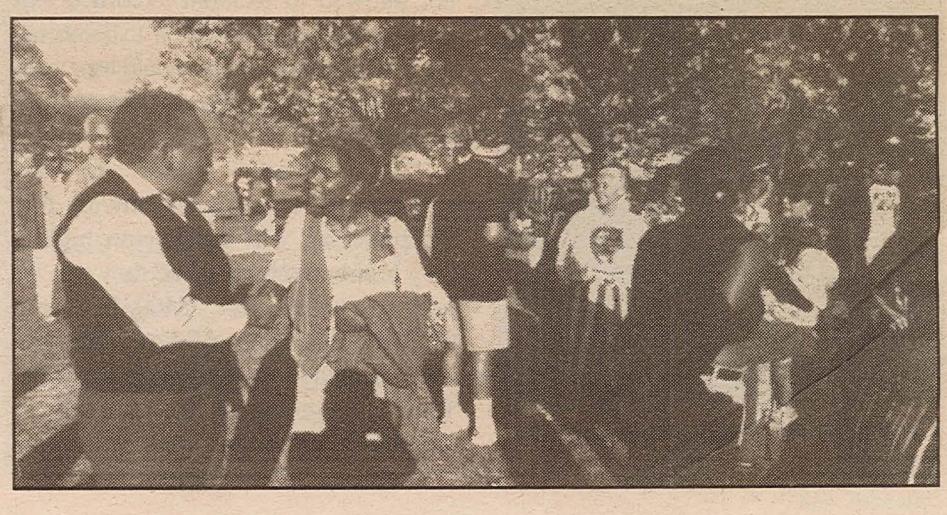


Melvin Dickson (right), editor of the Commemorator *newspaper, and Ralph Moore savor solidarity with old comrades.*



Commemorator *Editor Melvin Dickson (left), with volunteer Billy Burnley, staff CCBPP's literature table at the October 13th event.*



Bobby Rush, now Chicago Congressman, spoke at the 30th Anniversary dinner. Rush said, "I learned my skills from the Black Panther Party."

Former Black Panther member Karen Williams-Maxey (left) talking with graduate student and CCBPP volunteer, Robyn Spencer.